

**For Immediate Release:**

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*Worth County...*

## **Sylvester Awarded Grant to Enhance Jeffords Park Perimeter**

SYLVESTER – Sylvester will use its first Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council grant to draw more visitors to T.C. Jeffords Park and the downtown area by adding landscaping along the park perimeter.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has announced awards for 17 REBC grants valued at \$600,666. The awards, from the 2016 program, will be used for enhancement and beautification projects along Georgia's state routes.

Sylvester will receive a \$21,950 grant and was the only southwest Georgia applicant to receive an award. Jeffords Park is at the corner of U.S. 82/state Route 520 and SR 33 and is home to the city's annual Peanut Festival. City Manager Deborah Bridges said the train engine at the corner of the major intersection already attracts visitors and it is hoped that beautifying the area will draw more attention. The city plans to landscape the corner and add accent plantings along sidewalks.

"The REBC Grant Program is a great opportunity for local organizations and governments to enhance community pride," Georgia DOT Landscape Architect Manager Bill Wright said. "Beautification also enriches the experience of the traveling public as they drive along state routes in local areas."

The program was previously called the GATEway Grant program. Since 2008, Georgia DOT has awarded 143 REBC grants totaling more than \$5.5 million dollars to local governments and civic groups. Grants are funded through fees paid by outdoor advertising companies for the appraised value of trees removed in order to install signs. Any organization, local government, or state agency may apply for the grants, which reimburse costs up to \$50,000 for plant materials and installation along state routes.

"We are pleased that we can assist local governments and communities with these funds," Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurry, P.E. said. "GDOT is committed to enhancing quality of life throughout Georgia. Partnering with communities and organizations to improve their local landscape is one way we can do this."

Applications for the next round of awards will be announced when additional funding is available. Visit the REBC Grant program website: [www.dot.ga.gov/IS/Funding/REBC](http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/Funding/REBC). For questions about the grant program, e-mail [landscape@dot.ga.gov](mailto:landscape@dot.ga.gov) or call 404.631.1387.

*Summer construction is here. And Georgia DOT is conducting maintenance and construction activities on interstates and state routes across Georgia. Know before you go. Visit [www.511ga.org](http://www.511ga.org) or call 511. Georgia DOT urges motorists to always buckle up, stay off the phone – no texting – and drive alert. And please, watch for work zones. Help us get our workers – and you - home safely.*

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